(Preview) Hey kids, introducing the most pointless thing ever, TGX in 3 Dimensions, just turn on the 3d setting on your tv and and put on your 3d glasses to enjoy the madjesty of T-*Hitinfacebynose* (intro) It was a bittersweet feeling, the end of the road always is, even though I have this sinking feeling in the back of my mind that this isn't technically the end of the road but I have difficulty placing why I feel that way. In any case, Sly 3 honor among thieves was the intended final sly cooper game that suckerpunch would release and came out initially on september 26th 2005. There are many interesting things to talk about in reference to sly 3, but right from the beginning you see that this is the first game in the series not rated e, in this case sly 3 got the slightly more adult E10 rating. You may question what sly 3 did that the other games didn't, to which the answer would be, it's release date, as it was made very shortly after the E10 rating was instituted. This may seem random to bring up, but I think the rating is more significant, I don't think that this game was just one of the first e10 rated games. I have a sinking feeling that the ps2 mascot trio is partially responsible for the emergence of the E10 rating. Kinda like how Temple of doom helped usher in the pg13 rating because it was too adult to be pg but too tame to be R. Sly 1 and 2 in many ways are not E rated games because they’re insanely dark with the "totally not drugs" migguffin in 2, and the dark yet tame depictions of murder and torture, where ratchet and clank in many ways wasnt a T because while there is some fairly adult humor, much of those games are presented in a fantastical enough way to sepperate it from our deffinitions of adult. By which I mean, there's no blood and everything you blow up is an alien. In any case 2005 was actually the only year to my knowledge where you had a main series release of all 3 of the ps2 mascots, at least from their original developers, and sly 3 in particular was the worst selling game in the series up to that point, but I think the figures are inaccurate because I’ve seen greatest hits copys of honor amoung thieves floating around so I know it at least sold 1 million copies, regardless it still sold worse than sly 1 and 2. There's an argument to be made that each of these third games suffer from a number of issues mostly from the unfocused kitchen sink design and in some cases rushed presentation, as such they each have conflicted and varying opinions from those who have played them. Some saying they're shining golden gods that defines everything their series should be while others say their overstuffed turkeys and the stuffing is raw sewage. In honor among thieves case, it's a game that I keep having to remind myself of the significance of, as I've previously mentioned this game was my first sly game and came to me exactly when I needed it back in mid 2012, an extremely rough time for me and not just because gangnam style was just released. I'm not going to say this game saved my life because that would be a bit of a stretch, the only game I can say for certain actually helped save my life would be going commando, but after all of this time I'm somewhere in between the love and hate for sly 3 but I definitely lean towards the former camp as I always have in varying degrees. It's one of those games where I can acknowledge it's flaws while still enjoying it. Because it's most major flaws while fairly large are things that don't kill it for me and this game still has everything that I look for and like in a sly cooper game and then some. However that does come with an asterisk. I've made it no secret that I'm not the sly fan I used to be. My interest in the series has basically waned as my tastes have evolved and Sly 3 is a key example of that, because this game was once in my top 10 favorite games of all time, now I'm not sure if I'd even put it in my top 20. To quote a table, sad but true. But the day's still young, maybe it'll change my mind and if not I have some leftover

lighter fluid (meguitar) We didn't start the fire, actually we did AHHHHH (me) so let's take one final look at Sly 3 honor among thieves. Suckerpunches surreptitiously stunning sly swan song… SSSSSSSAH (game) So say it with me, This game starts in medias res, although it's technically pronounced rais. And this is an interesting one, because while mystery and intrigue is the big aspect that surrounds all of these prologues and both prologues before this executed this brilliantly, honor among thieves takes this a bit too far. Usually there's a degree of knowledge to when everything is taking place and what's going on. Here you know your breaking into a place here to steal something, but this could have been presented better as you can tell there's alot they're not telling you and spoilers, they continue to not tell you, who are these people, where are we, what in simple terms is going on? So sly and an expanded gang are breaking on to what is known as Caine island, to open a mysterious vault and you pull off an extended and harrowing heist to get there. You're introduced to this mysterious figure called dr.M. You get caught in the act, book it, and get caught in the clutches of a giant monster while trying to save bentley who starts to crush sly to death, following which slys life starts flashing before his eyes and that's when it's revealed that this was taking place at the end of the adventure and the rest of the game will be taking place flashback style. Of the three games this is absolutely the weakest opening, it has all of the aspects that were great about the opening of the first two games but taken too far as to come full circle quality wise so that for a first time player you have no idea what's going on as nothings made clear, even by the end it's a bit confusing, you only bareilly start to understand what's happening, as nothing's made clear. You know how I said that this was my first time playing sly? Well this opening was my first exposure to the series so you could imagine what I felt, sheer and utter confusion. You could ask, "well what'd you expect, starting with the third game?" Umm… comprehensibility, the exact nature of this opening is confusing to a first time player. If you're blaming me for not understanding, starting from the third game, well victim blaming for a start, and second I'm not the only one. I've had multiple people tell me that they were confused with the presentation, some being so confused they thought the game took place after the intro and they just mysteriously skipped parts of it. At least 500,000 people played sly 2 before sly 1 if the sales are anything to go by and that game answered everything you'd need to know before the title screen. Aside from the life flashing before your eyes but this is never really brought up again making it very easy to forget or simply not get. If they'd have flashed forward to sly with every chapter and had his near death reminiscence be the framing device this could have worked, kinda like the final chapter. As it sits, it's well executed in a vacuum in terms of tension and intrigue but so poorly presented as to be confusing. Plus, I can't be the only one who feels that being left on a cliffhanger of sly literally dying for the entire game as we recap all the events leading up to this point is frustrating and a massive cocktease. Like you showed us the payoff, so we know we're going to get to this point. Being left hanging on a cliff will fuck up youre forarms and quite frankly, I'd half forgotten the intro was even a thing because the relevance kinda fades after 10 hours. I got to the end and was like, oh yeah, that's a thing. If it were me I'd have done one of 2 things, either have the prologue be about the story from the prequel comic, specifically the part where sly is trying to find mcsweeny in a prison, seeing as the prison is filled with sly's old nemesis this could be a good callback as well as a tutorial. Failing that, I'd have had the prologue be a flashback to the ultimate falling out between conor cooper and Dr.M which could introduce Dr.M and establish

his motivation, as he's fairly underwritten, more on that later. Either way, this prologue could have been great if the presentation was better and that's a shame becasue this is something the first 2 games nailed. But I'll admit, seeing the main protagonist be crushed to death 10 minutes in is certainly an effective way to grip the player, and even though we know we ultimately get to the end, the story as presented is interesting enough that the ride there is fun. After this is another bugbear, forced tutorials. Where the previous games integrated the tutorials into the opening and first chapter, here there's an unskippable portion of gameplay in a sectioned off area separate from the rest of the game. Great for a first time player and a great source of fun dialogue, but would it have killed them to give players the option to skip it? Why did they feel the need to make a sectioned off tutorial in the third game, but not the first two? Do they expect you to be able to follow the prologue but not know how to play? (me) It's like getting to the 7th harry potter book before explaining what magic is (game) Thankfully that's pretty much the worst of it. Overcoming that, there's nowhere to go but up... except for chapter 2 oh god chapter 2. This game much like it's sister game Jak 3 has it's worst moments right at the start, and there's quite alot of good to be had after that. The first thing I noticed with sly 3 right off the bat is how visually striking it is, they had the comic book aesthetic in the first two games but they were also washed out in terms of its color palate and so resembled a batman style comic whereas here, to match the lighter tone, they turned the saturation way up to the point that this game feels like it hopped off the pages of a dick tracy comic. It's so bright and vibrant, it just pops. Art style wise this game is pretty much unchanged as they pretty much perfected the art style with sly 2 and if it ain't broke don't fix it. I noticed a particular emphasis on water here, I dont think there's one episode that didn't involve the strong utilisation of water, up to and including a pirate ship game. The character models are all crisp and well designed, as are the enemies, each episode environment is unique which makes exploring fun, you can explore a neat town in holland, vennice and all that comes with, a lawless pirate town, a cold Chinese town and the austral-ehh. I don't have much I could really say about this game visually without repeating myself, it's everything that made band of thieves great, but with more life color and energy that fits alongside the somewhat lighter tone. The comic book cutscenes have continued to improve from the previous games with more life and energy. That said, even though I'm thematically going against the game in doing this games primary theme, it's time for, the sanzaru games visual glitch showcase episode three… to be honest, I don't have much for you guys this time, not because they didn't butcher the visuals in places but because everything that is screwed up visually in honor among thieves was also screwed up in the previous two games, but I'll try. Where band of thieves only had some of it's full page graphics not reach the edge of the screen, here to my knowledge most if not all of the full page graphics didn't reach the edge of the screen up to and including the in engine cutscenes, kinda takes away from the effect of the cutscene when the thing that separates it from gameplay is seen right through. How about Bentley in his perpetual falling animation, how about whenever you change to  different disguise in the menu, the screen goes black, I've not edited this, or how about the game once again having issues in being converted to 16:9 so in one case you have penelope's face clipping though your view, the episode menu as a whole is another example of this. (show) Otherwise everything is repeated, the textures still blown up as they were, the models still occasionally clip through themselves or become see through in parts, the pop in is still there it's nothing you haven't heard before. So

repeat after me, resolution aside you'd probably get the better experience with the ps2 version as it was the game as intended and with this games art style there's not much that an upscaling can really benefit. Imagine that, repeating the same phrase gets boring after a while. But there is also a major audio glitch, for some reason in the fight between carmelita and mugshot, there's some glitch that activates that kills the music for the fight, then the music in the game is completely disabled following that until you die, how did that happen? (merainbow) Sanzaru games (game) So with that in mind I'll say something that I definitely haven't said yet, hitler had the right ide-I mean I think honor among thieves has the best soundtrack out of the entire series, I mean trilogy, I mean series, I mean, what was I talking about? It does everything the previous games did but does them oh so much better. The calm roaming pieces, atmospheric and beautifully composed (showx3) which skillfully bleed into the pieces that play whenever you get into a combat situation (showx3) so it's nothing you haven't heard before but the individual pieces are terrific, easily more enjoyable at a moment to moment basis that either if the previous 2 games. As ever they fit thematically very well as well. Like how the Venice theme will be more opratic, or the china theme more traditionally chinese. They're all great. So the main menu theme for a start is one of the mist dynamic and well composed pieces that hit you right in the fact from the moment it starts. (Show) This is tv show intro material right here. It's like jazz noir that punches you in the face from the word go. Then you have some other heavy hitters like the hazard room for as shit as it is has a really good soundtrack (show) it's upbeat and has an army training montage vibe to it and the boss themes as ever are a great source of excitement and epicness, in fitting with the tone of a desperate fight to the death (showx3) in particular the bamboo fight might just be my favorite bossfight piece in the entire series bar none (show). And considering how much I've praised the soundtrack in these games, sorta should give you an indication of what I think of it. There's nothing new I can really say about these things, only that it's everything that the soundtrack in band of thieves was, but more and better, with more catchy instrumentionals, refined composition, energy and excitement and so on and so forth, nothing you haven't heard before. So I'm repeating everything I've already said, the audio visual aspects are not only as good as they've ever been, they're better. With that you could say the same for the gameplay in theory, where all of the previously established aspects are as good if not better than they've ever been, there are some new things that make me want to cough up blood and that's not an unpopular opinion. But in terms of what they already had, it follows the videogame progression system that I've been theorising about for years, the first game makes a thing, the second fixes that thing and the third refines it. Sly 1 laid the groundwork, sly 2 expanded upon it and sly 3 takes everything we had and makes it making the gameplay at a moment to moment level more enjoyable. slys gameplay is basically unchanged because there were very few ways they could have improved it, the only major thing I feel is changed is in the combat. In keeping with the progression of the series, the first game being about espionage, the second being about heists this one is definitely more action focused so enhanced mechanics in that regard makes sense. Slys better in a fight this time around and has several upgrades that build into standard combat rather than feel like arbitrary gimmicks, so bonking people upside the head has taken center stage and works really quite well, the combat has that all important kick to it that makes it satisfying and there are enough differing enemies that it never gets old. That's not to say that the stealth has been forgotten. As a matter of fact, the stealth has actually been

expanded upon in certain ways, they added a disguise system for getting through hostile environments undetected assuming you can do the simon says quick time event thing, it's easy but somewhat annoying when you have to repeat the same 4 button combination over and over, and you move slower than you would, so sometimes it might honestly be preferable to just run in guns ablazing, especially now that combat is emphasised thankfully this is only really required a few times because you to kill guards without being detected, and even then. You can just as easily drop in, drop a smoke bomb, stealth takedown get into your disguise and boom. Another thing they added were level traps, you have a bunch of contextual traps that you activate with the press of a button and I didn't really use them, they're arduous to set up it usually means waiting for people to walk over to these traps which kills the pace, it's usually just easier to kill em where they stand, So it's a nice thought, just not taken advantage of, but all the stealth attributes are still there and sneaking through an environment undetected and stealing everything that isn't nailed down is still as rewarding and smugly satisfying as ever. That's right you bunch of 1's and 0's I'm better than you. And the freerunning attributes are also fairly unchanged minus a few amazing singular instances that we'll touch on. You traverse the environment and any time you come across something that's interactable you jump and hit circle. The biggest change is the general level design, the openworld hubs are all massive and while there's one particular dud, I'd say that this game has the best level design, pound for pound in the series. Venice is intricately designed but intuitive to get around with tonnes of little details and fun verticality, it's vast without being overwhelming, it might be the best designed level in the series, another contender would me the multi layered china level. Holland is pretty empty in parts but certainly has a bunch of well designed pieces, particularly in the town area. And The lawless pirate town is also very intricate and fun to explore with a bunch of unique areas and buildings. Sly 3 has fewer episodes, there's only 5 open episodes as opposed to the 8 in sly 2 but while the 8 were hit and miss the quality of the 8 has been evenly dispersed into 4 and they have the complexity and depth of two episodes, and then there's also episode 2. The controls are tight smooth and very responsive and the triple headed gameplay of stealth combat and freerunning flow into each-other seamlessly. Slys gameplay is basically perfect, and if it sounds like I'm not going too in depth, it's because I don't fancy repeating myself too much. (me) Too Much. (game) There are a bunch of functionally minor added aspects to sly's gameplay as well as some of the other characters gameplay many of which are meant to add to the thievery gameplay but they're mixed, some of them are cool and add depth to the stealing and others just feel like adding gameplay where there doesn't need to be any, one thing this game has an obsession with is double button security systems, which have to be pressed at the same time, that's the definition of arbitrary gameplay. More to the point it's the most useless security system ever, you know who it benefits, groups of people breaking in, or just one tall person, who doesn't it benefit? People who need to get up in the middle of the night to take a piss. (megsovertopofstatment) One thing I like is the deductive gameplay where you need to locate a vault code on a painting, actually scanning it and trying to find things to look like numbers, it actually makes you feel like a bit of a sleuth, too bad it's only a mystery once, if it randomised somewhat that would really benefit return playthroughs, but as long as you limit yourself, replay wise, you should be fine. Or how about this little lockpicking minigame where you have to slowly rotate the lock in several different directions while watching out to not turn it too far and have to

restart, I don't know, it's cool to have to manually unlock the safes, but at the same time it's more arbitrary gameplay, if there was more to it it would be fun, but it's so easy, there's no thought to it, just rotate one way than the other than back. That's it. There are these conversation trees used to mixed effects that bear no resemblance to actual conversation and seem like just going down a list of topics, sometimes you just need to dryly select the right option making it almost redundant, but they're also fun for getting the optional dialogue and this game's dialogue is certainly good enough to check out the optional stuff, like murray trying to make this dude laugh with terrible jokes. (racistjoke) (me) Racist joke, that's a new one (select) (whyareafricansafraidofchainsaws) (me)... FUCK, MURRAY (cutoff) Let's try something less contrevercial, how about a political joke (currentpresiden)... I don't get it. (newangle) If you don't like that joke, come back when a politician you don't like is elected then that joke will suddenly be more relivent to you (game) It's used to great effect in a scene with the panda king that I'll touch on when we get to the story but it's also used creatively in the vinegar talk minigame, otherwise known as "insult sword fighting?" Never heard of it. It's a charming game where you have to insult the black spot pete without repeating yourself, It's charming and that's the extent of the new features of sly's gameplay (that also occasionally cross over to the other characters) it doesn't add much but like I said, there isn't much new substantial to sly's gameplay because there's not much further you could take it without ruining it, the moment to moment gameplay has been refined to the point that, the running around, the combat, the stealth, the platforming, the freerunning, it's basically perfect. But murray and bentley on the other hand have both been improved extensively. First of all the maneuverability of these characters are much better, they've been given better voment controls and their ability to traverse the hubworlds are much less finicky meaning it's not wholly unpleasant to get around as these 2 characters. They have abilities unique to their physical stature, like how bently can hover and use booster packs with his modified wheelchair and murray using his new mystic powers he acquired from his training, which includes rolling around in a ball which in some cases is able to bounce a mile hi-*breaksthroughtelevision (me) Well that's something you don't see every d-*crushed*(game) Even though the worlds are generally built for sly and sly alone, the smoother movement, better movement abilities and more accessible level design makes getting around as murray and bentley not necessarily good but no longer arduous. They can even pickpocket guards now using their own unique abilities, bentley using a fishing hook with a magnet attached and murray literally shaking the money out of his opponents pockets by force which sounds like some joke that would be in some middle school drama, like the school bully would do this exact thing to the protagonist. So now when you're playing as separate characters you can get the extra money and rare treasure which weirdly gives you the money right away this time around, I'm fine either way, but it does feel kinda weird that the money just materialises from the either. You have the same powerup system that you did before where you can buy upgrades with money you collect and while many of these are still gimmicky, situational useless items, But the passive upgrades that improve attributes of characters as opposed to stapling on arbitrary mechanics are more common, and they're better balanced as well, like the smoke bomb doesn't just immediately make you disappear. And I'll admit I found myself using the new powerups more frequently like the health extractor or the size destabilizer (use) (me) Hey look, it even works on carmelita. (kill) (me)... *melt* OH MY GOD, I KILLED CARMELITA!!! (show) (me) Well, at least she dies with

dignity (game) So the hub-worlds are actually really fun and fluid to navigate as all the characters and the upgrades actually enhance the gameplay this time around. It's just a shame there's not as much of a reason to actually navigate the hub-worlds, and this is where sly 3 falls apart slightly. Somewhere between the level design of sly 2 and sly 3 lies perfect level design, because the actual design of 3 is great, but they're just big blocks that game-play takes place in with no actual reason to explore where the exploration mechanics in 2 were half good and half tedious. They removed all collectables from the overworlds in 3… all of them, the clue bottles, treasure, everything. I thought the clue bottles were poorly implemented but removing them all together smacks of taking your ball and going home when there were ways to make it work, have buyable maps, or a special upgrade to point us to the nearest bottle. But now with no reason to explore, I found myself making less money which meant I was buying less upgrades which meant I was more underpowered in some instances. And without explorative mechanics, these levels feel really barren. Even worse was the removal of rare treasure which was the best part of the exploration in two. So without a reason to explore these, quite frankly, fantastic overworlds you just end up running the beaten path from mission to mission and you don't have a chance to really soak in the atmosphere because you have no reason to. And without any major way to earn coins in a rewarding way, if you want to get money you'll end up just grinding the highest earning minigame in the game, these pirate ship minigames in episode 5. Now, I love this pirate ship game because it's a fun and well integrate swashbuckling adventurous aside that seamlessly bleeds into regular gameplay while also being a pirate ship game, and it's the highest earning thing in the game, with some ships giving you 600+ coins each (show) God, with that kinda scratch I could buy belgeum. It's a fun mode where you roam around on the open seas and choose to pick fights with passing ships, you give them a broadside attack with the triggers and your cannons having cooldown. Then you have the option to sink or board the ship and when you do board the ship you have to fight a miniboss and his entire crew in a really intense battle. It lacks some depth, but for what it is, it's a really frantic exciting game mode with alot of tension in never knowing if you're in over your head and will yourself get sunk. Issue is, this is the quickest way to get all the items and upgrades, so if you're anything like me, you'll end up grinding this mode to buy all the items which makes the novelty run out quick, I would have loved this mode and indeed did love it more when I did it on my own terms, but it being the only real way to make money becomes a problem. So an hour of grinding kills my enjoyment of it, so the bottom line is. Don't remove the explorative money making mechanics, make them better, keep the good aspects and improve the tedious ones. That way the people inclined can make money and have a reason to explore. The aspects that lead to full completion this time around are the master thief extra missions where you need to redo missions with a certain condition or move around the environment and solve a treasure map while avoiding surrounding guards which as far as I'm concerned they could have given us 10 of these, imagine optional treasure hunts on all of these extra islands or around the maps. You may think that I'd be opposed to doing the missions again but with added conditions, but no, I actually found the master thief missions a suitable replacement for the clue bottles. I find playing the missions in this game is the best part and so when you give me a chance to do that with added bonus, then I'm 100% for it. I was having alot of fun just steamrolling through these missions and only stopped when my game froze. I think the more you play this game the worse this will get where

the clue bottles can only really get so bad, then you memorise where they are, but I haven't played honor among thieves so many times that the mission structure has worn on me, so I can still very much enjoy just replaying missions but better. So the perfect combination for me anyway would be keep the treasures from 2 and as a matter of fact put even more pre level and then have the master thief quests from this game. But once again that's just me. The beaten path is probably the best it's ever been but when that's all you have it starts to become a big issue, as it's a semi open world game where you're just going from mission to mission so you might as well not have the open world. But there are many great missions abound. Structure wise, they changed the mission setup. The idea this time around is to get people to join up with the cooper gang for the final siege on caine island, how you do this is unique for every episode and as such the missions are unique for every episode. My favorite being the establishment in chapter 4 where, in this area that exists for this one section you have to make your way to the panda king and enter his mind to fight him before he lets down his guard or episode 3 where you have to do some sleuthing to figure out the flight rosters by negotiating with a re-emerging dimitry before breaking into the black barons hanger. Every establishing scene is unique which is exactly what I wanted compared to the constant repeating recon missions and it and the unique setup works because each chapter is so unique. Then as for the missions, they're pretty great. The usual goal of missions are put forth to try and make progress on the overall goal of the episode, and you have a bunh of fun missions that gracfully take advantage of the mechanics like you may have to trick carmelita to shoot you several times to charge a battery before making your great escape which hilariously flips their gamepaly dynamic on its head, you may need to sneak into teams of piolots sleeping quarters while avoiding several makeshift traps. Platform through an underground mine to get to your destination, run bombs over to various desitnations for some casual terrorism then have to chase after octavio to save bentley and so on, as bentley, any time they broke out the grapple cam it was great, solving enviromental puzzles to get up to general tsaos mainframe, saving penelope from lafwees hideout, everything. There are so many creative and fun missions, maybe too many gimmicks but there's as enough missions as sly for me to get my fix. But maybe because those are saved for the big final missions, not quite heists, you have a giant sequence of event's that include sabotaging pipeworks before taking part in an opera, stealing general tsaos treasure, leading to the destruction of his family temple while pulling a bait and switch, swapping jing king for carmelita, sabatoging half the buildings and security systems in Holland as well as some blimps before taking on the black barron. And trying to get one up on Lafwee, you think your two steps ahead of him, but then he thinks he's 3 steps ahead of you but you're actually 4 steps ahead of him (releasethecracken) None of these final payoff missions ever disappoint. That said, many of the better and worse missions in this game revolve around the other alternate modes, this is the game in the series that really went all out with the alternate modes and gimmicky minigames, before the singular ones multiplied, but here the actual modes multiplied. Leading to many one time use minigames that vary from decent to baffling. It kinda seems like they wanted to fit everything they possible could into the game whether it worked or not and the results are kinda mixed, and this is the make or break factor for many sly fans. The alternate characters for a start are a very mixed bag. The guru is actually really cool because he can possess guards and turn into inanimate objects, he's used sparingly but he moves around really well, movment wise he

kinda reminds me of bentley in band of thieves with better jump height, his missions are really creative, they usually involve possessing various people around the level for reasons, get them to run into things… actually that's pretty much the only string to the guru's bow but it's such a fun string, being able to control people against their will when they don't see you and then just force them to run into someone or something, or even off a ledge which is just super fun for the sheer novelty, but the guru as a whole ties itself into the regular gameplay enough that it's fun and intuitive to get around and you also get the hang of it instantly but the specifically guru exclusive aspects are really satisfying and you don't play it so often that it loses the novelty. Carmelita controls alot like sly but with a superjump and a gun. Because carmelita controls like sly it's another case where you immediately get the idea of how to play as her. But the unique aspects of her controls are fun to use and she's not used so often that she loses her novelty. That said, there's one problem that kinda kills the fun of using her. Her reticle is way too big and so there's no fun in having to aim and shoot, it's just too easy, you can hit people within a mile wide radius. And so there's no skill in using her, it's kinda the jumping off point, this is as good as it gets for pretty much all of the extra modes. But hey, the superjump is pretty cool. The last playable character that can be considered an actual playable character in standard gameplay would be the panda king who plays like murray but with really slow attacks and the main gimmick being fireworks that lock on to whatever's in front of you. He's used all of twice, he's really slow and unwieldy his attacks have the impact of wet farts, he's horrible to navigate with, it's just no fun to use him, but thankfully you only need to use him twice, and once is with you basically just standing in one spot, so at least it's thankfully inoffensive just for not really being used. But then it goes downhill from there. The best of the interludes would be the returning hacking minigame, you know, I've been staring at this hacking mingame for so long I can't even differenciate the ones from sly 2 and 3. They do continue to gradually expand the mechanics of the hacking minigame subtly, even including a boss this time around, these are fin asides that build into the standard missions, but nothing more than that. Of course they bring back the turret sections, if my memory serves me right, there's only one real turret section but it's easily the worst in the franchise, yes, I said franchise. You have to protect murray as he's making his way back to the safehouse with the van, but the big issues is you're moving into the enemy's spawn and the turret as ever is not easy to aim with the analogue stick so it starts out easy but as you move closer to the safehouse, you have less and less of a chance to shoot enemies who will then come from multiple directions and the do shitloads of damage to the van so it can turn around on you in an instant and if you fail, you have to start pretty much from the beginning of the turret section, I had to redo this part something like 30 times. Jesus H Christ this is the textboox definition of tonedeaf obnoxious gameplay, fuck this section. One of the first missions you play is this gondola shootout. It's surprisingly decent, the controls are responsive, shooting has alot of weight to it, the traversal of the path with all of the obstacles is slick and rewarding. It's only done a handful of times and there's always enjoyment to be had even through there's not much to it, it's a decent aside that doesn't wear out it's welcome. There's this one mission where you have to capture red scorpions but then you have to cool down your tires by running over blue scorpions and going in the water The truck your driving around in feels floaty and it's obnoxious at times to make the truck flip, there is a bit of the performing mixed in there and it gets a spark of intensity when the water drains and you have to rely on the blue scorpions to get

by but it's less intensity and more obnoxiousness because now I have to focus on not dying as opposed to the mission. Immediately after that we have the Oscar award winner for most baffling minigame, you have to protect this machine from miners by throwing them with a giant crane… What? Why? You just pick people up and throw them… What is the damn point, couldn't I just, yaknow, protected murray by fighting people on the ground, it's arbitrary variety where there doesn't need to be any and the variety that this adds is mediocre at best You move around in a straight line and pick people up. It doesn't add anything substantial so it's not good or bad, just baffling. If they actually had me on the ground protecting murray melee style than this would be good. Failing that I just wonder why this even exists. I have a feeling though that this was only meant to setup part of the final mission in this area and… I'm not ready for that yet. There's these sections where you need to row a dinghy and… oh my goooood this is slow slow slow. Were there not any better ways to get us through these sections or could this at least be faster, I feel like I have to kill my thumbs to get anywhere because you move slow as shit, I guess that's in an effort to not make these sections pass by too quickly and to make it so you have time to dodge obstacles, but I don't want to play these for too long to begin with, then if you want to give us more of a chance to dodge, give us better maneuverability. The end. Moving on we have these godfights, and this actually works really quite well, the flying controls are smooth and intuitive. The shooting is responsive, it's a pretty good mode and I'm surprised they don't do more with it, but I enjoyed what they did do with it. There's one game where you have to switch between two different screens to activate traps to keep mugshots minions out. It's built off of a similar mode as bentley from band of thieves, except there's no way to protect yourself if the enemies get near you so it's just a frantic timing exercise and nothing else, it's okay and it's pretty exciting but as per usual completely disconnected from anything we've ever done. But it's fine for what it is and isn't too obnoxious so it's fine. It… is what it is, Why am I even bothering to mention all of these individual modes, they're fine, they're all fine and there's nothing more to it, I could go on and on talking about each individual mode but they're all basically as good as the need to be, inoffensive but bland… They're… All… Just… Fine. The only other major mode that actually shakes things up is this one mode where you play as dimitry swimming underwater. You only have to do this a few times and you actually fight a boss, but you mostly just swim, dodge with the face buttons and shoot things with your harpoon. It's a fine enough interlude, but as with everything else I've mentioned, the fact that they're all interludes as opposed to extensions of the gameplay is the real issue. And that's it. Wow, I'm sure you can tell by the amount that I had to go over that this game really did throw way too much shit at the wall and it's so overstuffed that alot of dead weight starts leaking out. Having a few instances of interlude game modes ae fine and sly 1 and to a lesser extent 2 got this balance just fine but three goes way overboard. This game is about as long as sly 2 so I'm not going to say that it's padded but they really did just put way too much into it for all of it to work and I would have preferred it to specialise a bit more, in fact, if it were me, I'd have cut out half of these modes and integrated them into the better modes or just cut them out completely and find something better for people to do, because there are good additions and the base gameplay is better than ever so if this game emphasized its strengths, it could have very well been uncontroversially considered the best game in the series, but alas. For my money however, this game is built on 1 central point. In many ways, It has the highest highs in the trilogy, but also the lowest lows of the trilogy. And if

you’re able to put up with the bad, the good is the best good the trilogy has to offer, that’s the real formula for enjoying this game. I kinda respect this game as well becasue Suckerpunch knew this was it for them and so it was a “speak now or forever hold your peace” situation. So even though some of this was misguided, I can’t help but respect a developer that wants to do everything it possibly can do with something before they give it up. You see, it’s been theorised that after the modest but not groundbreaking hit of sly 1, sly 2 was a make or break for suckerpunch, if it didn’t succeed that would have been it for them. So while that was a possible last sly game this was an intended last sly game and what it ended up being in spite of it’s flaws is a respectable and overall great system. And the one thing that this game does better than any game in the series is the ending, if there’s one thing this game absolutely nails, it’s the lasting impression. Before that though, boss time. In all honesty, the bosses in this game are pretty damn good. Minus one acception, octavio is great, it starts as a charming musical rhythm game that rides the line of absurd but funny (show), then a gondola fight and a final fistfight which is just a really fast franetic smackdown as murray with the addition of having the tar as his weakness. And I really enjoy this, it’s just a pure fistfight with added aspects that make way for finesse, and it’s tough, it escalates, it’s a pure traditional bossfight with a cross country jog in between but it’s so fun and well designed that I love it. Luring octavio into the tar required timing and finesse, it’s a great fight. The Black baron bossfight is simple and perhaps easy, but the buildup to it as well as the setting of fighting on top of an airborne plane makes it feel epic. It’s pretty basic, just attack him and make sure to get out of the way of his attacks. Simple but the atmosphere makes it work. Episode 4 has 2 different bossfights and the first might just be the greatest in the franchise. You start out with this great platforming section where the guru makes a bunch of items float for you to platform across, which is really fun with the subtle added humor of taking unsuspecting people right off the ground and hopping on their head (show) Then the first part is this indescribably awesome zero gravity jousting duel between you and General tsao. Like I can’t stress enough how cool this is. Perhaps the fact that it’s only done once is what makes the novelty so grand. You jump across the arena and try to damage Tsao while avoiding the attacks from him. After that part two is a very tough one on one with tsao where he breaks out all the stops, you have to be on your toes, hell take away your only means of verticality, it's actually really great. The only thing that kinda sucks is he's easy if you know what you're doing, but it's still intense as hell and easily the most stacked and most well designed boss the actual episode boss is a giant ancient chinese dragon. It's cool for the fact that you have to launch yourself skyward to get there, giving you a vertigo inducing view of the ground far below you kinda like a scaled down version of aveon from shadow of the colossus. It's pretty epic, but very easy, getting back up can be frustrating when having to find something to launch you. It's still one if the better bosses in the series but it's in the unfortunate position in having to be compared to the general tsao bossfight. The bossfight between lafwee and penelope is pretty lame, you just need to dodge lafwees easily dodged patterns and hit him off the platforms(me) smartest man on the 7 seas my ass (game) but hey this is the only time you directly play as penelope so that’s cool. The final boss rounds the game off really nicely, you face dr.m in the inner sanctum of the cooper vault and it's a hard as hell 3 stage fight where you need to bash him while working your way around attacks, hell get more aggressive as the fight goes on, utilising different elements that require evolving tactics to get around and the specifics of his attacks, and

when to attack, which are the best attacks to use and he's hard, even with all of the upgrades I failed my fair share of times, but it's a rewarding enough fight that I'm compelled to just keep tossing myself at that wall until it breaks. And lowe when it does, you're on top of the world, oh yeah, there's also 2 "bossfights" as carmelita but they don't really count, they're more setpieces than full on bossfights as you basically just hold down the fire button until you win, with one Sly literally lures carmelita into a confrontation with mughot so she can deal with him and take him out of the competition (promdate), in fact she's even the one to do dr.M in as the final stage of dr.m is played as her. Which is actually very thematically syncornis, if you think about it, in all 3 games the carmelita factor was what ultimately lead to victory, she gives sly the jetpack and made clockwerk vulnerable with her shock pistol in one, provided the firepower to do clockla in and was the person who laid the final blow in two and saved sly while also delivering dr.m his ultimate defeat in 3. Considering how sly was responsible for carmelita catching so many wanted criminals this subtly interweaves a theme throughout the trilogy. Sly and carmelita are basically made for each other because whether intentional or not they bring the best out of each other. They are each others opposite but also each others saving grace, yin and yang. I should also briefly mention this game's obsession with 3d, the old version had the option to switch to the old fashioned red and blue 3d (howboutno) Whereas the new game fully supports sterioscopic 3d as this game out in the 5 or so minutes that it was popular. Which is fine, but it's just funny to note that the cutscenes that involve the 3d glasses in game are still there, they're just entirely redundant now. So with that, the gameplay is very hit and miss but the high highs vastly outweigh the lows for me. And if youre willing to go into this willing to accept the less than good parts, I guarantee you'll be blown away and seeing as the conversation has naturally flowed into the narrative. Before we talk about that there needs to be some preliminary discussion, so last time the prequel comic was fairly pointless in the grand scheme of things, mostly existing for world building, the one for sly 3 is actually very important, it fills in a bunch of blanks from between games. Most of which is recapped, so you're not really missing anything, but this adds depth and context. So first of all, after being crushed by the head of clockla, bently was hospitalised, ending up being fully paralysed from the waist down. With the police in hot pursuit, sly and murray narrowly break him out. But Murray's not able to let go of the guilt for what he feels as being responsible for Bentleys injury, and left the team, then sly breaks into a supermax prison home to some of the people that he's tussled with in the past, he's there to find his fathers old accomplice Mcsweeny who contacted sly, and eventually tells him about caine island, the cooper family vault and where to find a map. Long story short, they screw the pooch and can't get the map so it ends up in evidence with carmelita, but sly manages to get it anyway, leading to a great exchange between him and carmelita, one of their best. This happening was so embarrassing for carmelita, having the entire case taken from her right from under her nose that she immediately reverted to carmelita classic in her views of sly and hired a group of ape super soldiers to deal with the cooper gang once and for all. That's alot to get through, but you basically get everything you need to know from the game, But there are some important blanks this fills out like where the apes come from, why other than professional obligation does carmelita disregard the ending of sly 2, and so on. It's not the most important thing but it is a necessity compared to the first adventures of sly cooper. So the plot this time around as was established in the intro to the game is that Sly was told about the island where all of sly's

ancestors kept their stash of treasure after each ancestor retired. However he finds it to be overrun by a mysterious figure called Dr.M who's incensed with the desire to take the cooper fortune for himself, and he's a super genius that's locked the island down tighter than… tighter than something (me) I had the urge to make a remark about murray's pants for some reason, but then I remembered, murray doesn't wear pants (game) And now the chances of sly actually being able to storm the island and take what's his is mathematically insignificant, so they need to grow their team with people of all walks of life to fill in the blanks that they need so that they can take back the cooper fortune. To do this, you get into contact with multiple specialists throughout the world and do what they need you to do for them before they join the gang. You need to save venice from the black water before murray will rejoin you, you need to save the autralitan outback before the guru will join you, you need to best the black baron in his own dog-fighting competition before penelope will join you, save the panda king's daughter before he'll join you and finally you repay a favor to dimitri which ends with him joining you whether you like it or not. Then as you saw, regardless of how well they prepared, they seemingly ultimately fail in the end. Once again, the plot in broad strokes is really very simple but once you get into the details, in particular the character interactions, this game becomes much more nuanced and dramatic than the framing device will lead you to believe. If they play the end of the game first and you know exactly what's going to happen but the ride there still draws you in, then it does something right. And sly 3 is a great example of that. And there's so much going on that I'm honestly not really sure where to start. I guess I'll start with DR.M. He's simultaneously one of the best and worst things about this game. Because in the short time that he's on screen he established himself to be such an intimidating, vile and most of all unhinged madman. He himself isn't too intimidating, but he has a bunch of machinery that he's built that can do the job for him and he also perplexingly has an army of minions, the main one's being elephants. In his first appearance on screen, he remorselessly kills one of his minions in a matter that's probably played as the straightest on screen murder in the trilogy, it's almost desturbing(show) Dr.M isn't even shaken, it's so casual for him but he just bluntly killed this guy for screwing up. After the years and years of feeling neglected by sly's father even though he felt that he was the reason for all of conor's successful heists, yes Dr.M we find out was part of Conor coopers gang and felt that he was entitled to the cooper gang's fortune after playing second fiddle to conor for so long, so he legally purchases caine island and spends years and years trying and failing to break into the vault of the cooper fortune gradually becoming more and more unhinged with failure after failure. The funny thing is, the extent of the bad blood is never really fully shown and who the real asshole is between connor and dr.m is left up to the player. He's such an instantly unlikable character, within 5 minutes he's crushing sly to death because he's so incensed with wanting what he feels is his, and his dialogue is so snappy and precise. (show) Everything he says is so verbose and impactful which goes with his ultra smart character. The issue is, he's only actually in the game for the intro and for the last episode. Which makes up 5-10 percent of the game and I can't be the only one disappointed by that. Sure it makes him into more of an overseeing figure and the mystery makes it more naratively satisfying when you do end up actually facing him. But he's such a great villain with such a great personality who so great to hate that I wish he wasn't the type of villain where you have to basically fill up a progress bar to even meet him. I wanted more of a handsome jack less of a gruntilda, because the mystery

added to clockwerk, not so much with Dr.M. The more Dr.M the better it would have been in this case. I thought this through, and the solution I came up with is that; without the cooper gang succeeding in their quest to recruit more people and pulling the heist, Dr.M can't get into the vault. As you can see here, he's tried to make several fake canes which act as vault keys, so he probably knows that the only cane that will work is sly's so, he needs to get the cooper gang onto the island. So what if he acted from behind the scenes to lay the groundwork so that he could lure the cooper gang in making them think they're acting under Dr.M's nose before he springs his trap and reveals that he was orchestrating the whole thing. All that it would take is a few cutaways where he's dealing with various little things around each environment to lay the groundwork, maybe even almost getting caught a few times. It's implied that Dr.M was the one to get Mcsweeny to contact sly, so the groundwork was already there, they just needed to capitalize. Dr.M's great, but he could have been better. But I guess it says alot that he's in the game for such a short amount of time and can still be good enough as a villain to be one of the best villains in the game or even series. I'd say he's the worst of the three main villains, him, Clockwerk, and neyla, but he's miles ahead of whatever the fuck clockla was, every moment Dr.M is on screen he makes everything better but there's just not enough. Then again, there's probably no such thing as too much. Dr.M represents probably this game's primary theme in my eyes, the present overcoming the past and in many cases, progress overcoming tradition. You see, the subtext of pretty much every episode is people being trapped in the past being toppled by the next generation. General tsao for example has his entire character built around his family legacy and his entire downfall is his traditional views of the world, and in particular, women. I think another key theme is forgiveness. The big thing that seperates Bentley from Dr.M aside from being able to recognise the differences between the past and the present is the ability to forgive. Because a big part of the story is the parallel between Bentley and Dr.M, maybe Dr.M Has a point, maybe sly sees him and murray as lackies. Which I kinda with they took it a step further and had Dr.M be in some way handicapped and had artificial legs or something to really drive that parralell home, Sly is forced to work with the panda king, aka one of the fiendish five, aka, the people that killed sly's parents. To say they're reluctant is an understatement, both the panda king and sly are basically one snide remark from going for the jugular. The thematic synchronicity in this game is really impressive, nate fox once again is to my knowledge the sole writer and he caps of the trilogy in an impressive way that only he can. But some people disagree, there are plenty of valid complaints I've heard about this game but I want to address the less than valid more popular ones. Meaning I'm gonna strawman the fuck outta this, so allow me to introduce, Jimmy… Patt... and Toilet, the Bitchy Gamer ShitZ (megsandflashyintro) (me) so whaddya got for us bgs (megs) man, why would sly work with the panda king, that makes no sense. (Game) First of all, bentley needed an explosives expert, so you could presume that in needing the best of the best, he would probably go for the devil they know as opposed to scouring the globe for another candidate, and 2, that's like asking wrestling fans why don't they watch mma. Drama, we already had 2 new characters who's joinings were presented in 2 different ways. Would sly be reluctant as fuck to work with the panda king? Of course. But that's the idea, you want to put your characters into situations of conflict to let the dramatic tension build, what dramatic tension would there be if we had to have another new character when we already had 2. It provides a well written arc for 2 character while also making sense within the

context of the story. (Megs) Maaan, bentley being jealous of penelope liking sly came outta nowhere (Game) It was one of the first things they showed after penelope started showing interest in sly (show)  (Megs) Maaan, bentley turning on sly came outta nowhere. (Game) Yeah, it sure does come outta nowhere, if you're completely averse the the concept of subtlety, one of the first things that happens in the game is octavio referring to bentley as the real leader of the cooper gang, and bentley talking about his wounded pride. right there they planted the seeds of bentleys descent. Then throughout the game, he's constantly throwing out hints of a growing resentment, because everything frustratingly revolves around sly and everything goes sly's way, most of all the penelope situation, leading to one point where bentley literally goes off on sly to penelope before admitting how crushingly jealous he is of sly. So no, the build to bentley questioning sly was build it just wasn't in your face, which is apparently beyond some people understanding. Then again the people who make complaints like this are probably the same people who will say (megs) I have a hard time navigating these environments, I'm a toilet (game) yeah, if you have trouble navigating these environments, go back to kindergarten. Even if these environments weren't intuitively laid out which they are, objective markers… L3? So with that out of the way, this was as established, designed to be suckerpunches goodbye to sly and so there's alot of tying up loose ends and callbacks to the first 2 games. For example Mugshot appears in episode 3 as a secondary protagonist in the dogfighting competition, which makes sense as the black barron while a cheater wasn't exactly a bad guy, mugshot's disqualified from the competition and eventually arrested, never to be seen againin anything that matters, there's also this nugget (showmother) (me) Oh… Oh… OHHHH (Turndowndforwhat) (me) That's totally not dated. (game) Then there's dimitry who has a redemption arc, you reluctantly break him out of prison for the sake of convenience, but then eventually he helps you in exchange for a favor, eventually you help him get retrieve a family heirloom after which he joins your team and you gain a mutual respect, although he's still perplexingly popular and I don't get it. Once again he speaks weird and is eccentric, but did he really warrant a return, at least they didn't use his beta design (show) UGGGH (game) Most interestingly the panda king returns as I mentioned, he's out of prison and is seemingly enjoying a life of tranquility, but he has demons in head. He could never mentally cope with being defeated by sly and has tried to mend his ways. Which has basically split his personality in two. His aggressive side and his peaceful side. His daughter was abducted by general tsao and the panda king went into exile. If there's one thing I take issue with, it's the idea that he's resentful for sly defeating him and sending him on the trail of self destruction when sly went after him to save the people he terrorised and to get revenge for mr. King killing sly's parents, he was the bad guy in this situation, in which case Mr. King should get the fuck over himself (me) I mean, god knows how many people he killed in his escipades, how he even got outta prison this quick is a mystery. You're a murderer, you deserve everything you got, you egotistical skidmark (game) But the ends justify the means, as the cold alliance between the two and the subsequent forgiveness is one of the best parts of the game narratively. In particular the moment where he decides to face his inner beast to try and manages to find a balance, the yin and the yang. The dialogue in this entire section is on point (showx3) and the interactions between sly and panda king after this is hilarious (won'tkillyou) I've already talked about how great the dialogue in these games are a number of times, but I think dialogue wise, sly 3 is where it's at it's best. There is so much umph to every line stated,

and too many quotable lines to count (showx5) And seeing as structurally this game is more of a comedy than the previous 2 games there are even more deadpan laugh out loud moments than before (showx5) even in the little things like the disguises between missions. I think the absolute most laugh out loud hilarious sections of the entire game would be the mission where you need to get blueprints by disguising yourself as one of octavios guards. I can't do justice to how funny this mission is, here are just some highlights (show) Every single line is solid gold, but it's still delivered in a deadpan enough way that it can retain the serious tone. Even before the mission sly was delivering dry but punchy lines (show) In short, I feel that the script in this game is pretty much as close to perfect as it could be at a functional level, even throwaway background dialogue is on point (show). The story as a whole is far from perfect but in terms of dialogue, the balance of serious while being funny is the best it's ever been. And I'm going to go on record here as saying that the venice level is the best episode in the series, from the dialogue, the level design to the villain, to the mission structure. Everything, it's just fun in every way it can be, it's a shame what they followed it up with but nevermind. The main trio have underwent some pretty seismic changes. Sly is probably the least changed of the 3, he's still basically the main man of the group and has a quippy sarcastic personality that's really charming mixed with a serious edge, always knowing the time and place for a swiftian remark (show) and when to be deadpan serious (show) so he's always appropriately acting to every situation, making him come across as very human. At first he's basically the vessel by which the story takes place, they need to recruit murray and 4 other characters of varying skills to win back his family fortune, but as time goes on, they establish 2 things, one a "sins of thy father" storyline where he has to prove through his own actions that he and his family line are not defined by the mistakes of the past. And secondly involves carmelita. Basically their thing up until now has basically been playful flirtation mixed with sprinkles of genuine emotion as their dedication to their professions indicate they could never make it work, even though they have enough sexual tension to melt steel beams. But as he's being crushed to death and it's dawning on him that he's failed in his mission, all he can think about is how he could never make it work with carmelita and how much he regrets it, how after all this time the only thing that matters to him is her, not the treasure, not his family legacy, her and he might never see her again. Even though you know he's not going to die, after the 3 games of will they won't they, this is heartbreaking to se-(slydies) Well that was unexpected(game) and the payoff is very satisfying, and they payoff to that also pays off the sins of thy father story-arch simultaneously and ties sly's character development in a neat little bow, but we'll get to that. Obviously bentley is the one who's taken through the ringer. After the fight with clockla he's left paralyzed and has built a mechanised wheelchair for himself so he's tried to not let it get him down, but it really does start affecting his psyche. He developes an insuperiority complex and as the game goes on things start to weigh on him. He starts to doubt sly's intentions, maybe sly sees him and murray as lackies as opposed to equals. And naturally, as an insuperiority complex does, seeing sly succeed where bentley only wishes he could succeed makes bentley jealous and resentful. Even with penelope, Bentley's just found the woman of his dreams, the first person he's ever met to match him intellectually. But she's not interested, she immediately turns her attention to sly. Granted they did hilariously lie to each other about their appearance, but thatès neither here nor there. After saving each other's asses a few times, bentley wins penelope's heart. But in the end he still doubts sly's true intentions,

but murray ends up being the voice of reason (show) And in the end sly proves where his intentions lie. His gang were more than sidekicks, more than partners, but family and showed his appreciation in the biggest way he could. Once again we'll get to that. Murray's an interesting one because his entire character has changed. He walked away from the group because he couldn't live with himself in feeling like he was responsible for bentley getting injured. Remember that atrocious subplot in sonic lost world where sonic's like "I'm the fastest thing alive, but I wasn't fast enough to save my buddy" Well it's like that except presented really well. He feels real remorse and can't forgive himself even though bentley believes he wasn't at fault. None the less he scoured the globe on a spiritual quest to try and find himself. He does find it in himself to forgive himself while also finding a balance between the new murray and the murray. But he also suspends his training with the guru for the time being who also joins you. The main trio are still thankfully being portrayed by kevin miller, chris murphy and matt olson and they've basically perfected these roles, I can't think of anybody else dawning these roles and doing them anywhere neare the same level of justice. And the rest of the voice actors are also on point. Kevin Blackton, Leo Chin, Lorin Hoskins, David Scully, Annette To-ton-gi and so on, they all bring these characters to life expertly. Carmelita also got a new voice actress, Ruth Livier, and I'm going to go on record here and say that she's the best voice of carmelita. She has the latina accent to a solid degree without it being stereotypical, and She finally has some fire to her delivery. She kinda has this calm controlled passion to her. I dunno, I just find her to do what they wanted to do with the characters better than the others could. Carmelita's character on the other hand is also pretty good. You don't really know what's going on in her head, becasue as ever she's a very inward person. But the thing is that she knows she has a thing for sly but aside from having been embarrassed by him in the prequel comic, one of her primary characteristics is stubborness, that combined with her obsessive dedication to her job means that she has to constantly deny what she feels. But there are hints thrown out here and there. Most of all when she wonders what interest he has in some bride (show) She's doing everything in her power to bottle up what she feels because as much as she wants to give it a shot with sly deep down, She can't find it in herself to do so, and then she also spends the entire game picking up after the cooper gang minus episode 5, standard stuff. Penelope is an interesting one, she's allegedly working for the black baron and won't join your team until you've defeated the black baron in his own competition, hey look, exactly what I said, murray showing his practical intelligence. Turns out however that penelope was the black baron all along, who donned the gimmick because of the strict age regulations in the dogfighting league. The subsequent love triangle between the three is a great plotpoint with an even better resolution which makes sly realize how much he's missing out with carmelita. He sees how happy they are together and it gets him to reconsider everything. This is all solid stuff, but there is one major issue with the story from an overarching point of view. All of these episodes don't really matter in the grand scheme of things. In sly one and two, everything you did built into your overall goal, gradually taking down the fiendish 5 and taking back the thievius raccoonus, taking out the klaww gang and gathering parts of clockwerk. Everything you did and in particular the plot of each episode tied into the overarching plot. Because Dr.M is off doing his own thing and isn't involved in the plot at a episode to episode level, or as intellectuals call it a severe case of the ripto's, this game feels like a series of disconnected individual plots that tangentially build into

the main plot as opposed to one big story. Dr.M isn't involved with octavio or general tsao, that's incidental to the subplot of each of those episodes. So you have 5 subplots that aside from one aspect aren't connected to the main plot, and there's no overarching entity that connects the plots of each episode the way the integration of the fiendish 5 or the klaww gang did. So what I'm trying to get at is that the lack of integration of the overarching plot with Dr.M it makes the main conflict in the game lack presence, it doesn't feel important, it's just a nebulous thing. You have 5 minor plots and a slightly less minor plot as opposed to one thing that builds from start to finish diminishing the impact. Aside from sly being crushed, this means that you don't get any sly 2 episode 4 moments or sly 2 episode 7 moments. But the benefit of this is that you end up having a series of villains that stand up on their own merits. Octavio is hilarious but also an irredeemable bastard in basically trying to poison venice in an effort to elevate his career because he can't cope with the fact that society has moved on. But the real coup de grace is General Tsao who is the embodiment of irredeemability on the level of 80s era Ric Flair. He's the one you love to hate and has no positives to his character whatsoever. (show) He's a stuck up pompous egotistical ass based on his family line, who believes he's god's gift to earth, entitled in every way he can and also has this little gem (show) the context is that he's basically abducted the panda king's daughter jing and is forcing her to marry him. The thing is, I love how hatable he is, alot of what he says is said in the most vile way in both tone and writing, as ever the voice acting is top notch. Redeemable villains are all well and good, but developers shouldn't be afraid to have characters who are scum of the earth, when we bring down the worst of the worst, it's the most satisfying villain defeat. He's maybe not the best villain in the series but he's the most easy to hate and the most satisfying to take down. Every villain has a humanity to them, but not Tsao, sly even says so (show). After you take back jing, steal his treasure, destroy his family temple, the final act has you trick carmelita into posing as Jing King who takes out General Tsao thinking he was sly. As a bit of continuity, the halfway point of this episode has general tsao raise the dead as extra help to stop you. But as established in sly 1 the production of zombies was made illegal in the world peace accord of 1971 so general tsao gets arrested as well as humiliated, you see that, that is the face of a man who has hit rock bottom. But given his character there is nothing more satisfying than seeing that. Best part is, his downfall wouldn't have been half as impactful if he wasn't such an unapologetic misogynist, why? Because carmelita is the one to do him in. His 1800s views of gender roles being his downfall. A similar thing happens to Lafwee who's another unapologetic misogynist, but not quite as hatable as General Tsao. He kidnaps penelope and tries to force her to fall in love with him, but she's eventually freed by bentley (butme) (me)... ew (game) and ends up being the one to do Lefwee in. Once again somebody with archaic views of gender roles being done in by the people they see as lesser than them. Progress triumphing over tradition. It's funny how going into episode 5 you think that black spot pete is going to be the antagonist, but that's a bait and switch because Pete is geriatric as they come. So all of these villains are great in their own right, but like I said earlier if Dr.M would have been manipulating things from the shadows to lure the cooper gang into his trap, that would have connected all of the episodes into one big plot without losing out on the strengths of the presentation as established. I think one of the biggest indications of the cooper gangs growth is how good they are at thinking on their feet. In sly one, they essentially got through the game without failing, but then in two they started slipping, in 3

there’s not one episode that goes off without a hitch, I guess seeing as there’s no connection to the overarching plot, you need to add drama where you can get it. But now, as the cooper gang has grown, they’ve basically mastered the art of improvisation in their plans. Nothing ever comes easy, compare bentley in the second game versus this one. The biggest one is probably when general tsao finds bentley’s laptop mid slideshow, and sly has to book it to get it back. How about when Carmelita crashes the opera right before you take octavio out. Which ultimately leads to Bentely getting knocked silly and murray snapping. You’re never sure what’s going to happen, there are so many twists and turns that this story takes you on. Maybe it should have taken on a few less twists and turns, like suddenly becoming shit for a episode. Alright I've been beating around this bush long enough, what I equate as the worst episode in the series is without a doubt, sly 3 episode 2 Rumble Down Under. It basically fumbles everything the game does well. Story is, some minors have taken over the chunk of the australian outback the guru was stationed in, and he's been locked up so he won't get in their way. As a native, this is near and dear to me. From the premise alone you can tell this isn't good because there's no singular antagonist and so who ends up being the antagonist is pulled out of the hairiest and squidgiest butt you could imagine. It's set in the australian outback which means the level design is boring and graphically it's just the same repeated texture throughout with a few interesting bits. The mission structure is filled with one use gimmicks and who does the final antagonist end up being… the mask of dark earth. Who appears apropos of nothing. Sentient masks can be good villains, but they're usually given personalities like uka uka or influence personality like majoras mask, where dark earth here is more of a migguffin than an actual character so everything that involvea it falls flat. So you have a lackluster setup that forces boring graphics and design, terrible minigames and a boring non villain. Is it any wonder why this episode is popularly considered the worst in the series? Well hold on to your butts, it gets worse. So the mask of dark earth's thing is that it makes the wearer hulk , what they gain in size and strenth they lose in intelegence. Not really explained, but we'll roll with it. Sly's never ran on our logic, it runs on its own logic and we know that magic exists in this universe. But then in the final sequence through a series of contrivances, the mask ends up on carmelita who's there suddenly, and Bentleys attempts to tranquilize her… well. Here's the thing. It seems that for every game, there's an example of a weird carmelita moment. And they seemingly got worse as the games went on. The first game was a very sober, she gets captured and locked up, then in the second game a similar thing happens except she gets bound to a table which is a X2 multiplier and then in the third game, this happens. (show) (me) This is like a fetish on fetish sandwich (game) As the game puts it, she becomes carmelarga… yeah. I’ve never claimed to be uncomfortable with carmelita’s representation because she is a strong character that happens to be a woman, and her femininity is only really brought up in her relation to sly and some subtle aspects to how she carries herself and acts that wouldn’t be there if she were a man. But this actually makes me uncomfortable because it’s a case where, whether intentional or not, it really does feel like a fetish. Like I feel the idea of crawling all over various parts of carmelita’s anatomy and getting those juicy close-ups of her… assets (me) dear 2005 era suckerpunch… roses are red, violots are blue, keep your fetishes to yourself or I’m gonna shoot (game) either feels like it was a joke, or feels like somebody was getting off to it but either way it feels like a massive slap in the face to a genuinely great character. Thankfully this is as bad as it

gets… in this game anyway, so if 1 is a weirdness x1 multiplier, then 2 is a x2 honor among thieves would probably 2 squared which makes this game's weirdness multiplier x4 and giver the progression it would move on to cubed which means (1=1, 2=2, 3=4, 4=16) Ain't that the truth. Sometimes I'll see a red flag in regards to a characters represe tation, but this is a bouquet of red flags. From the initial concept all the way to its execution, this was never not weird. So yeah, episode 2 drops the ball big time. Which is a shame because this episode also contains one of the best missions in the series in the lemonade bar fight. Starting out as a non-descript quicktime event sequence before turning into an old west style saloon throwdown where you cycle all the characters while also getting a deeper feel for their personalities and connections, and then it leads into a miniboss where you take advantage of each characters abilities to damage a roided up enemy. It's a really great sequence and one of the best in the game. They had the ability to make the australian outback at least somewhat interesting but this is the outlier in the worst episode in the trilogy. But episode 2 benefits from one big thing, it's the second episode in the game. Meaning it's at the closest point it could be to the intro to not harm the initial impression and as far as possible as it could be from the end to not harm the lasting impression, it's at the perfect point of inconciqueciality that you basically forget it by the end and the actual end is probably the most well executed part of the game. It starts right from the moment we left off and the deus ex machina turns out to be carmelita herself who saves sly and attempts to take Dr.M into custody, and then she has to fight off his mutants along with her ape soldiers. Sly is alive, bairley. And it's established that he's suffered a massive concussion, and his brain could snap at any moment. Which is meant to set up the final moments. After the carmelita bit, you start in a long string of gameplay sections that cycle through almost everything that we've established and as the scope of gameplay gradually opens up the scope of what we see of the island gradually does as well. There are very few stones left unturned, going through the lesser modes gradually building that climactic tension and paying off every mode that we've established as you make your way slowly to the inner sanctum of the vault. It's everything a great climax should be, gradual setup and picture perfect payoff. But so few climaxes I've seen do the act of scratching and clawing your way to the top of the hypothetical mountain so well. And so by the time you get to the end it feels properly fitting and climactic. They nail the atmosphere of a tense climactic showdown perfectly with the mood, the lighting, the build, the music, everything. You get to the smackdown as murray, the great creativity with the bentley bit while fighting Dr.M and most of all the absolutely picture perfect platforming section with sly where you get as pure of an experience as you could imagine. It's almost like an incredibly well designed and difficult nostalgic throwback to the first game interwoven with a history lesson on sly cooper and their ancestors/abilities. Ending with learning the ability to slide on lasers from his father, his final gift to sly. Granted, it's functionally the same as the rail slide, so honestly, who really cares? It's just another way to do the same thing. Be that as it may, I could not think of a more perfect sendoff for the series than this. It might just be gameplay wise, the best individual part in the series, but there are many contenders for that. If I were to give an award for greatest sequence in any sly game, episode 6 here would probably get it. It's far from perfect, but as a singular entity it serves its purpose perfectly, building to the final encounter, and by then end you can cut the climactic tension with a knife. Finaly you make it to the inner sanctum of the vault (cuttoblack)(me) Wait, I went into the vault and the game cut to black, what

is this? The sopranos, what kinda shitty non ending was that, we didn't resolve anything… Oh wait, I had the terrible ending mode on, man sanzaru games really wanted to sabotage the way this series ended. (game) You get the final encounter where Dr.M and sly face each other and Sly in a final act of defiance shows that he's different from his father and is not defined by his father's mistakes, finally letting progress overtake the past. The only issue is that, with the ending carmelita has to show up, so instead of showing up through the same way sly and dr.m came through she just bursts through the wall, into the inner sanctum in a vault that Dr.M spent years trying to get into(Areyoufuckingkiddingme) But it's a means to an end and probably could be simply explained by the sentence "She was fighting a giant mutant, they could probably accidentally blow a hole in the side of the mountain". In the end Sly's blasted and gets amnesia while carmelita deals with Dr.M. Then this a point of contention for many people, carmelita convinces an amnesiac sly that they're partner cops. Which means that carmelita would be taking advantage of an amnesiac, making a sweet happy ending rather problematic. I don't interpret it that way. I think that Both sly and carmelita saw this moment as an opportunity to make things work, and knew that they were lying to the other, but they both knew that they knew that they were lying to each other. And just wanted to take the chance after all this time. From there, the final cutscene plays, Dr.M in his madness allows the mountain to come down on him, even though he'll die he's content knowing that he finally made it into the vault. Everybody else then escapes. (show) Then as a final gift to his friends, sly leaves his cane and the entre cooper fortune to his friends, as he's moving on and doesn't need it anymore, a gesture that shows how much they all meant to him. And the gang goes their separate ways, a bittersweet but perfect, ending. (show) Allowing all the characters to go out on their own and live happily ever after, living to their own devices. A logical conclusion and goodbye from suckerpunch. Sly who's totally not amnisiafied lives happily ever after with Carmelita fighting crime, Bentley Lives happily ever after with penelope as they rebuild the cooper vault and murray lives happily ever after with his van so really everybody ends up with their true love (timemachine) (me) Huh, I wonder if that line has any relevance. (game) So that was Sly 3 honor among thieves and wow. That was a doozie. So here's the thing, I think that there's alot that this game does wrong but just for the sheer volume of things that this game does right I feel that this is the peak of the trilogy. I has the lowest points in the series and some questionable design, but Sly cooper is solid but questionable design the series. It's a trilogy where you've always had to put up with some annoyances to enjoy the trilogy, because it's always been a trilogy that's better than the sum of its parts. And for my tastes I'm willing to put up with the trilogy's lows if it means that I can experience the series highs. And that's what sly 3 is. It has the look, the feel, great gameplay that I feel could never be matched in any sly cooper game, a great story that really sticks the landing and ties everything up in a neat little bow perfectly and… this is tough guys, this is really tough. It's really tough to be at this point for a series that I felt was so great for so long, but I didn't realize how bored of this series I was until I basically had to drag myself kicking and screaming to even finish the project.They're still games that I can get alot of enjoyment out of but I just don't have any passion for the series anymore, not enough to really want to continue talking about it. I still consider these games as a few of the prime examples of storytelling in videogames, but the passion just isn't there anymore. Maybe It's something in me, maybe it's something in The games themselves, but when I'm so ambivalent about a game that I'm not

finishing the project out of strong emotion, but out of obligation, something's clearly wrong. I don't care what happens next with sly cooper if anything. I love this trilogy, it'll always hold a special place in my heart, but I just don't care anymore, and I really hate that's the case. (Me) so I guess this is it, this is the end of the road, I think it's finally time (sadmusic) *takingdownposter* finally have an excuse to tkae this shitty thing down. (Offscreen) Wait a minute, aren't you forgetting something. (Om) (me) heh? (Om) don't you think that in slys case, stopping at 3 is jumping the gun slightly (me) *nevouslaughter* pshhh pshhh, pshhhhh, no. (Om) ya sure? (Me) *dramaticzoom* Of course I'm sure. (End)

And I was umming and arring about even bringing this up as well, but part of the decline in my passion for this series can be placed. I'm not passionate about the series, partially because of you. Okay maybe not you specifically watching, but here's the thing. I'm not an idiot, I know full well that I'm something of a pariah in the sly community, there's a good portion of good people in the sly community who have stuck with me for all this time, who can take criticism on the nose and are arbitrarily angry. And to those people, thank you, you make it worth it. But there's a sad minority of subfunction douchebags in the sly community who can't stand my very existence and to those people. You made me walk away from being an active member, you're the reason why it's no longer fun to talk about sly, because any time I say anything negative, you're like moths to flame. People who don't understand that criticism exists so things can improve. People who will go out of their way to get peoples channels shut down for daring to be critical of the series and then turn around and act like a victimised minority. People who are content with anything and everything if it involves a recognisable name they like and will lash out at you for daring to criticize said thing, who will ceaselessly defelct criticism for more and more arbitrary reasons in an effort to try and debunk me without actually making an argument, oh you don't like x because of nostalgia, yeah nostalgic for a series I started playing in 2012, cause that holds up. Or how about the manchilren who will ask me "it's for kids, why are you critisizing it" which my response is, if it's for kids why do you care? People who mention my name in the same way they'd mention the word gonorrhea. People who have delusions of grandeur for sly and refuse to acknowledge that the last sly thing that was even a modest hit came out in 2005, and if you bring this up, you know bring up reality, suddenly your a hater because these people have no logic, people who will create their own versions of history to try and make me seem like an asshole or to make scenarios up that make no sense, people who will blame sony for the series decline when; as a company if they saw a profit in sly they'd make more stuff because that's how business works, people who will blame me and people like me for the series decline because apparently criticising the series harms the series and makes sony not want to make more because somehow that makes sense when in actually we're just bringing more attention to the series which can only do good, expcially in showing what not to do. Need… I… go… on. I didn't even want to bring this up because I knew I'd be stoking the fires, but this has been festering in me for years. I'm not mentioning specific names because they've been so many that they all fade into the white noise, but if the shoe fits, wear it like the complacent bitch you are. Do I care if you hate me, do you wanna know the truth, se la vi adios good riddance fuck you. Once again though to the good hearted, good natured, good intentioned sly fans, thank you,

sorry you have to be associated with these types of people. I didn’t want this to end this way, but you brought it on yourself

Bentley falling animation part 1 1:03:20
Tranquel fury, that’s the phrase I was looking for